

*City of Las Vegas*

## **AGENDA MEMO**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DATE: MAY 28, 2009**

**DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**ITEM DESCRIPTION: ABEYANCE - GPA 33721 - APPLICANT/OWNER: CITY OF LAS VEGAS**

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### **\*\* CONDITIONS \*\***

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:      APPROVAL:**

A summary of the proposed changes of the West Las Vegas Plan are expressed below:

**1. The Planning Process section of the West Las Vegas Plan is hereby amended as follows:**

#### **PLANNING PROCESS**

04/27/08 2008 APA Community Planning Workshop

On April 27, 2008, the Historic West Las Vegas community was selected as the site for the 2008 APA Planning Workshop. The one-day workshop engaged an estimated 60 community leaders, citizens, stakeholders and guest planners to propose specific solutions to urban planning challenges. The workshop resulted in a list of the following recommendations for the area:

- Consider the development of a strategic implementation plan comprised of a community vision with strategies to build successes and drive momentum.
- Investigate techniques to create an environment and incentive for homeownership
- Examine methods to provide a mix of housing types to attract young adults
- Study ways to increase density and develop mixed-use with housing on the upper levels and business on the lower levels on areas such as Jackson Avenue and D Street
- Analyze strategies to promote and preserve locally owned businesses
- Provide attractive streetscapes with tree lined, narrow streets, lighting, crosswalks and sidewalks for pedestrians
- Examine the establishment a main thoroughfare connecting Union Park to Historic West Las Vegas
- Study methods to revamp the community's image and perception
- Consider renaming streets to celebrate and support community achievement and foster a positive image
- Examine the placement of signage to promote the Historic West Las Vegas Community
- Consider an expansion of the Redevelopment Area and the incorporation Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds
- Investigate the creation of community development corporations. Encourage churches and third party organizations to be proactive in the construction of housing and partnership opportunities

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- Analyze the creation and enforcement of design standards for the community
- Examine streamlining the planning and approval process for new development
- Include current landowners, especially churches in the strategic plan development.

04/02/09 2009 First Neighborhood Meeting (GPA-33721)

The first neighborhood meeting was held at Doolittle Community Center and 57 members of the public participated. The primary focus of the meeting was to present proposals to amend the West Las Vegas Plan. The amendment encouraged the implementation of streetscape and median improvements, community identity markers and improved neighborhood livability. Comments were received and proposals were revised for presentation at the following meeting.

04/30/09 2009 Second Neighborhood Meeting (GPA-33721)

The second neighborhood meeting was held at Doolittle Community Center and 45 members of the public participated. The primary focus of the meeting was to present revised proposals from comments received at the 04/02/09 neighborhood meeting. Comments were received and incorporated into the document.

**2. Implementation #5 of the Land Use section of the West Las Vegas Plan is hereby amended as follows:**

**LAND USE**

**5. Implement a Main Street Program for Jackson Avenue.**

In the early days of West Las Vegas, Jackson Avenue had been the commercial strip for the Westside, with several small cafes and shops. During the 1940s Jackson Avenue became the home to many small jazz and social clubs including black owned businesses such as the former Harlem Club, Ebony Club, the Brown Derby and the Town Tavern. Today, Jackson Avenue remains as the commercial strip. There is little in the way of community services such as a market, shops, barbers, and cafes; however, there are a few churches and small private clubs mixed with vacant properties. To revitalize the once vibrant street it is recommended that a Main Street program be implemented to include, but not limited to: façade and streetscape restoration and business start-up support.

The Main Street Program will incorporate the following goals and strategies to improve walkability and the quality of life along the corridors of Historic West Las Vegas centering on Jackson Avenue and H Street:

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- Reclaiming streets for pedestrians
- Rights-of-way where pedestrians, bikes, cars, and transit can co-exist
- Sidewalks that allow for diverse pedestrian activities
- Well-lit, shaded and furnished spaces that promote public interaction
- Intersections that are easy and safe to cross
- Link infrastructure improvements with economic development and housing opportunities

**Action:**

1. *The Planning and Development Department, in conjunction with the Office of Business Development and the Neighborhood Services Department, shall investigate and implement a Main Street program for Jackson Avenue.*
2. Improve Jackson Avenue from D Street to H Street with repaired and replaced sidewalks, repaved streets, street trees, sidewalks, pedestrian light fixtures and banners.
3. Establish a Main Street subcommittee to work with staff on the streetscape design for Jackson Avenue.
4. Planning and Development Department shall develop a Walkable Community Plan with the goal to improve the quality of life of residents by providing convenience and access.

*Source: West Las Vegas Plan, Input from Community Meeting (2009).*

**3. Implementation #6 of the Infrastructure section of the West Las Vegas Plan is hereby amended as follows:**

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

6. Examine the circulation and transportation corridors within West Las Vegas, and opportunities for infrastructure improvements, including: sidewalks, streetlights, pedestrian overpasses, bus turnouts along major arterials and the provision of covered bus shelters and trash receptacles at all stops.

An Issue pertaining to circulation and transportation from the West Las Vegas Neighborhood Plan is the traffic flows along major arterials have become more intense during peak morning and afternoon travel times. Traffic congestion is also attributed to buses stopping at non-turnout lane bus stops. Many of the bus stops are not sheltered and have no trash receptacles. A concern from the May 6, 2004 community meeting was the need for infrastructure improvements on many streets, such as sidewalks, streetlights and pedestrian overpasses.

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At the April 27, 2008 APA Community Workshop, a recommendation was to establish a main thoroughfare to connect Union Park to the Historic West Las Vegas community with the intention that the multi-billion dollar, 61-acre mixed use cultural, economic and educational center, less than a mile from Historic West Las Vegas, could be a catalyst for redevelopment.

This implementation item was revisited in an update of the West Las Vegas Plan in 2009. On an April 2, 2009 neighborhood meeting participants provided comments on the repair and maintenance of sidewalks, need for bike lanes, lighting, shade bus stops and removal of overhead wiring.

Additionally, the City has recently changed the way it plans for its capital projects by standardizing the CIP process. This new approach stems from the City's strategic planning efforts and a move towards performance based budgeting. Coordinating capital expenditures so that budgeting and planning efforts are linked logically and efficiently is one way to support the City's strategic planning priority of manage cost and revenue resources to achieve efficient operations.

**Action:**

~~Where determined, the Public Works Department shall work with the Finance Department to seek funding for necessary infrastructure improvements (including, but not limited to, sidewalks, landscaping, streetlights, pedestrian overpasses, and bus turnouts) in the West Las Vegas area.~~

1. Connect infrastructure planning in West Las Vegas to the Capital Improvement process, including, but not limited to, sidewalks, landscaping, streetlights, pedestrian overpasses, and bus turnouts, and coordinate infrastructure developments requiring capital expenditure so that budgeting and planning priorities are linked logically and efficiently.
2. Phase 1 – Implementation
  - a. Establish bike lanes from an area bound by Lake Mead Avenue, Tonopah Drive, Washington Avenue and D Street.
  - b. Replace and repair sidewalks and provide street trees in an area bound by Washington Avenue, H Street, D Street and I-15.
  - c. Provide streetscape and median improvements on D Street between Washington Avenue and Jefferson Avenue to include landscaped medians, new ornamental street lights and banners.
3. Phase 2 – Implementation
  - a. Study the removal of overhead wiring and replace with underground wiring.
  - b. Examine B and C Streets for sidewalk installation, replacement or repair.

**Source:** Input at Community Meeting (2004 & 2009); West Las Vegas Neighborhood Plan; West Las Vegas Plan; Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan, 2008 APA Workshop

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**4. Implementation #9 of the Infrastructure section of the West Las Vegas Plan is hereby amended as follows:**

**9. Enhance the Owens Avenue corridor**

At the April 27, 2008 APA Community Workshop, a recommendation was to establish a main thoroughfare to connect Union Park to the Historic West Las Vegas community with the intention that the multi-billion dollar, 61-acre mixed use cultural, economic and educational center, less than a mile from Historic West Las Vegas, could be a catalyst for redevelopment.

As Martin L. King Boulevard, which runs north to south, is a primary street in West Las Vegas to facilitate traffic movement, Owens Avenue, which runs east to west, is situated near I-15 and presents opportunities for access and connectivity.

Enhance the Owens Avenue corridor through investigating the following:

- Improved access to I-15 through new on-ramps or the use of parallel roads;
- Improved aesthetics through planting streets, trees, decorative street lights, etc;
- Improve connectivity to the neighborhood;
- Sidewalks

***Action:***

1. *Provide a north/south parkway type corridor connecting D Street, B Street, Loose Road, running through the West Las Vegas community to facilitate redevelopment opportunities along this new corridor.*
2. *Realign Owens Avenue from a one-way couplet to a single four-lane road to enhance east/west circulation and encourage commercial redevelopment along this corridor.*
3. *Provide an I-15 frontage road for direct access to Owens Avenue from the Washington inter change and the Lake Mead interchange in order to increase access into this community and to facilitate redevelopment opportunities.*

***Source:*** *Input at Community Meeting (2009); 2008 APA Workshop*

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**5. Implementation #13 of the Historic Preservation section of the West Las Vegas Plan is hereby amended as follows:**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

The Action Plan item listed under this category pertains to historic preservation in the West Las Vegas Plan area.

~~13.~~ 14. Work with the West Las Vegas residents and neighborhoods to document and preserve existing historic, cultural and architectural resources.

The history of West Las Vegas is intimately intertwined with the beginning of Las Vegas. In 1904 a surveyor named J. T. McWilliams began selling lots in the McWilliams townsite that later became known as the “Westside” because of its location on the west side of the railroad tracks. Many historic resources, such as the McWilliams townsite, Westside School, Christenson Home, Benny Binion House and the Moulin Rouge are located within West Las Vegas. In order to preserve and protect the history of West Las Vegas, historic cultural and architectural resources need to be documented.

The first school, the Westside School, in West Las Vegas opened with two rooms and two teachers for four grades. From 1904 until 1923, children from McWilliams’ Townsite crossed the railroad tracks to get to school in Clark’s Townsite. This dangerous situation lasted until the Las Vegas School District built this two-room school on land in the new Valley View addition, adjoining McWilliam’s Townsite on the east.

The school quickly expanded with two more rooms in 1928 when news of the construction of Hoover Dam brought families from the south searching for work. A kindergarten was added 1938, and in 1942 a small building from the Civilian Conservation Corps camp was moved to the site to house third and fourth grades. Fifth grade was added in 1947. Finally, in 1948, a concrete block addition with eight classrooms was built next to the original school building to house sixth, seventh and eighth grades. In May 1949, twenty-seven students graduated in the first eighth grade commencement class.

New neighborhoods and schools to serve them came quickly in the 1950s. The Westside School, was phased out for school use in 1967, and became city property in 1974. Shortly thereafter, the city leased the building to the Economic Opportunity Board (EOB) as a community center and radio station.

With the renovation of the Historic 5<sup>th</sup> Street School in the midst of downtown Las Vegas’ office and legal corridors, which is home to an assortment of local arts and architectural organizations, the Westside School seeks similar opportunities for renovation and multi-purpose usage.

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***Action:***

1. *The Planning and Development Department, in coordination with the residents of West Las Vegas and other interested parties, shall work to document and preserve the existing historic cultural and architectural resources found in the West Las Vegas area.*
2. *Pursue the preservation, maintenance and protection of the Westside School.*
  - a. *Hire consultant to completing an existing conditions study and Historic American Building Survey for the existing structures;*
  - b. *Complete restoration based on consultant recommendations;*
  - c. *Continue to pursue all available funding for restoration and building improvements.*

**Source:** Input at Community Meeting (2004 & 2009); West Las Vegas Plan

**6. Implementation #15 of the Urban Design/Visual Image section of the West Las Vegas Plan is hereby amended as follows:**

Urban Design/Visual Image

Urban Design involves the physical and environmental quality of the West Las Vegas Plan area, including the perception that both residents and others have of the area. Urban Design is concerned with the visual and other sensory relationships between people and their environment, and it offers a discipline for analyzing and solving problems of the built environment.

One important aspect of Urban Design is Visual Image. Visual Image is the perception that individuals, residents, and visitors have of West Las Vegas. This perception is formed by both:

- the structural organization of the area, the physical design of the streets, blocks, and buildings
- the physical condition (environmental quality) of the area, which is determined by the orderliness and cleanliness of streets and yards and the structural condition and appearance of buildings.

15. Improve the physical character and enhance the visual image of West Las Vegas through streetscape improvements

Many streets in West Las Vegas, not unlike those throughout many parts of Las Vegas itself, are visually unappealing, and present a negative visual image of the area. Improving the streetscapes (landscaping and other roadside amenities) can have a very positive impact, both on residents' feelings about their neighborhoods, and on visitors' perceptions about the entire West Las Vegas community. Emphasis on providing safe and pleasant pedestrian path system, and aesthetically pleasant and effective signage system are also important when considering streetscape improvements.

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An effective method for applying streetscape improvements is to implement them along the primary and secondary streets most frequently traveled by both residents and visitors:

- east-west primary and secondary streets: Bonanza Road, Washington Avenue, Owens Avenue, Lake Mead Boulevard and Carey Avenue
- north-south primary and secondary streets: Martin Luther King Boulevard and H Street

Another objective of this streetscape program is to create attractive “gateways” which identify the area and portray a pleasant and positive image to motorists or pedestrians entering West Las Vegas along primary or secondary streets. These gateways will consist of attractive urban design and landscape features at major intersections on the periphery of West Las Vegas.

Actions:

1. Implement streetscape and median improvements along the primary and secondary thoroughfares in accordance with the following guidelines:
  - spatially define the streets by planting the trees along the public right-of-way in a linear pattern
  - use a specialized landscape planting program for major intersections use drought tolerant plant materials
  - in segments with high projected pedestrian use, give more attention to pedestrian amenities:
  - crosswalks, wider sidewalks, pedestrian activity nodes, benches, kiosks, etc. provide pedestrian linkages between residential areas and schools, libraries, parks and open space, and transit stops
  - provide all segments with appropriate lighting and signage
2. Based upon the input from the APA Community Workshop, initial applications of streetscape and median improvements should occur within Historic West Las Vegas.
3. Include, in the streetscape and median improvements, a series of public art projects which can be implemented with community involvement.
4. Implement “gateways” to be applied at the major entranceways to West Las Vegas, and Historic West Las Vegas.
5. Interested community members and stakeholders work with the City of Las Vegas Arts Commission on a public art program/plan for West Las Vegas.

Source: West Las Vegas Plan, 2008 APA Community Workshop, Community Meeting (2009)



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**\*\* STAFF REPORT \*\***

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This is a request to update and amend the West Las Vegas Plan, to encourage the implementation of streetscape and median improvements, community identity markers, preserve historical resources and improved neighborhood livability.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by P&amp;D, Fire, Bldg., etc.</i>	
03/12/92	The Planning Commission approved the three Land Use Sector Maps of the General Plan.
03/02/94	The West Las Vegas Plan was adopted by the City Council as an Element of the City of Las Vegas General Plan.
08/18/99	The City Council approved GPA-23-99, which amended the density range for the Low Density Residential land use category to allow a maximum of 5.5 dwelling units per acre, Medium Low Density Residential to allow up to 8 dwelling units per acre, and Medium Density Residential up to 25 dwelling units per acre.
09/06/99	The City Council approved GPA-10-00 to amend portions of the Southeast Sector Plan to indicate areas of potential transition, correct errors from GIS data conversion, and match actions since 1996.
09/06/00	The City Council approved the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan. This site is within the Neighborhood Revitalization Area as described in the Plan.
04/03/02	The West Las Vegas Neighborhood Plan was adopted by the City Council as a non-binding amendment to the City of Las Vegas General Plan.
01/26/06	The Planning Commission approved the request (DIR-11049) to revise and amend the West Las Vegas Plan.
03/01/06	The City Council approved a request (GPA-7292) to designate Future Land Use Designations located on the West Las Vegas Area Plan Map
05/17/06	The City Council approved a request (GPA-9219) to change the Future Land Use designation to Commercial, Mixed Use, Industrial or Public Facilities on various parcels located within the proposed Las Vegas Redevelopment Plan area and within the proposed Redevelopment Plan expansion area.

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<b><i>Neighborhood Meeting</i></b>	
04/02/09	<p>A neighborhood meeting was held on April 2, 2009 at the Doolittle Community Center, 1950 J Street at 6:00 PM. 57 members of the public were present at the meeting. The following is a summary of the following thirty-one comment cards that were received at the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was predominate amount of responses that wanted F Street reopened and access to 61 acres;</li> <li>• Participants wanted additional meetings and input in the plan;</li> <li>• Participants were opposed to increased traffic;</li> <li>• Signage should be a tool to market the community;</li> <li>• Restore Westside School in the similar fashion as 5th Street School;</li> <li>• History needs to be preserved;</li> <li>• Artists need to be involved in the design of streetscapes and signage;</li> <li>• Visual Improvement Grants need to be available to land owners;</li> <li>• Opposition to taking land from property owners;</li> <li>• Community groups need to lead redevelopment efforts;</li> <li>• There needs to be a detailed action plan for redevelopment.</li> </ul>
04/30/09	<p>A neighborhood meeting was held on April 30, 2009 at the Doolittle Community Center, 1950 J Street at 6:00 PM. 45 members of the public were present at the meeting. The following is a summary of the following eleven comment cards that were received at the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Improvement sources of funding was discussed;</li> <li>• The process of selecting streetscape improvements and public art was discussed;</li> <li>• Land use will not be part of this proposal;</li> <li>• Don't do the project half-way, do it right;</li> <li>• Make the proposals clear and explain eminent domain;</li> <li>• Expand the RDA and the scope of the Main Street Program to include a "Historic Church District";</li> <li>• Explore high-speed rail into West Las Vegas;</li> <li>• Change Bonanza Road to Moulin Rouge and D Street to Sammy Davis Jr. Parkway;</li> <li>• Use old Moulin Rouge design as art work for an entry way into West Las Vegas;</li> <li>• Have a designer work with community members on landmarks and signage;</li> <li>• Establish community buy-in for art projects in the neighborhood;</li> <li>• We need one mega park;</li> <li>• No more large rocks in the median;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owens Avenue Corridor: no one way couplet in realigning Owens. No expressway or on/off ramp;</li> <li>• “Walk of Fame” great idea;</li> <li>• We need local streets and we must not become a drive-through neighborhood;</li> <li>• Signage needs to be clear and specific;</li> <li>• F street needs to be opened.</li> </ul>
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## ANALYSIS

The West Las Vegas Plan is being updated in accordance with Objective 2.3 and Policy 2.3.2 of the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan, which requires Special Area Plans to be updated periodically and provide direction for the West Las Vegas area. The previous update of the West Las Vegas Plan in 2006 incorporated recommendations of the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan, the 1994 West Las Vegas Plan and the 2002 West Las Vegas Neighborhood Plan.

The West Las Vegas Land Use Plan area is north of U.S. 95, south of Carey Avenue and Lake Mead Blvd, east of Rancho Drive and west of Interstate 15.

The proposed amendment to the West Las Vegas Plan expands in detail and illustrates a clear direction for implementation items in Land Use, Infrastructure, and Historic Preservation sections. The detail is provided on areas such as streetscape and median improvements, community identity markers, historical resource preservation and improved neighborhood livability.

The amendment also reflects the input that emerged through the American Planning Association Community Planning Workshop on April 27, 2008, which engaged community leaders, citizens, stakeholders and guest planners to propose specific solutions to urban planning challenges. The proposed revisions of the Plan also include the comments from two neighborhood meetings where staff from Neighborhood Services, Public Works and Planning provided assistance.

A summary of the proposed changes are reflected in the following table:

Section	Proposed Changes
<b>Planning Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added language to include recommendations from the Historic West Las Vegas Community Workshop and comments from neighborhood meetings held on 04/02/09 and 04/30/09 at Doolittle Community Center.</li> </ul>

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<b>Implementation</b>	
<b>Land Use: Implementation Item #5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added text to incorporate goals and strategies to improve walkability.</li> <li>• Added three action items to include streetscape improvements on Jackson Avenue, establishment of a Main Street subcommittee and a development of a Walkable Community Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure: Implementation Item #6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added APA Community Workshop recommendation.</li> <li>• Added action items organized into two phases of infrastructure improvements.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure: Implementation Item #9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added a new implementation item to the Infrastructure section: <i>9. Enhance the Owens Avenue corridor.</i></li> <li>• Implementation item #9 is based upon a recommendation from the APA Community Workshop.</li> <li>• Added three action item proposals to enhance the Owens Avenue corridor.</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Preservation: Implementation Item:#14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added language to the implementation item to include the preservation, maintenance and protection of the Westside School.</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Design/Visual Image</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added a new section in Implementation, which discussed the visual and sensory relationship between people and their built environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Design/Visual Image:  Implementation Item:#15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added a new implementation item to Urban Design/Visual Image: #15. <i>Improve the physical character and enhance the visual image of West Las Vegas through streetscape improvements.</i></li> <li>• Added five action items to include streetscape improvements along thoroughfares, public arts projects, gateways at major entrances and community involvement through the Las Vegas Arts Commission.</li> </ul>

**NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS NOTIFIED**

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**NOTICES MAILED**

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**APPROVALS**

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**PROTESTS**

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